

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

Resolve, To Ensure the Continued Accessibility and Affordability of a High School Equivalency Exam for Maine Residents

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the general educational development examination, known as the GED examination, has provided an opportunity for thousands of Maine residents, including 2,021 such Maine residents in 2011, for a 2nd chance to successfully complete their secondary education, to enter the job market and to obtain postsecondary education; and

Whereas, the GED examination is currently readily accessible to Maine residents at nearly 80 local adult education centers in all counties of Maine; and

Whereas, the GED examination is currently offered at no cost to Maine residents, with costs shared by the State and local adult education programs; and

Whereas, the GED testing program is about to undergo dramatic changes that threaten the accessibility and affordability of the test by placing significant financial burdens on both the test takers and the local adult education programs that offer GED testing; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Review of options for administering a high school equivalency examination. Resolved: That the Department of Education, referred to in this resolve as "the department," shall undertake a thorough study of all options for the administration of a high school equivalency examination, including those offered by competing vendors; and be it further

Sec. 2 Report. Resolved: That the department shall prepare and submit a report based on its study under section 1 to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs comparing the various high school equivalency examination options based on their cost, accessibility and educational efficacy. The department's report must include a plan for ensuring the continued availability of a high school equivalency examination at no cost to test takers and continued accessibility at all local adult education programs currently offering this service with minimal financial impact on these programs. The department shall submit its report and plan to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by April 1, 2013.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This resolve requires the Department of Education to examine the options for the administration of a high school equivalency examination and to develop a plan for the continued availability of a high school equivalency examination. The department shall submit its report and plan to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs by April 1, 2013.